

## Visa (Europe)

### European brand repositioning

Visa is often misunderstood: most people think it is all about credit and lending. In fact, Visa is a payments system which handles more debit than credit transactions. Building the Visa brand raises some important challenges both in terms of this, and other factors, such as:

- Visa is trying to **change behaviour** – to encourage consumers to migrate to using cards instead of cash. This will bring huge benefits to the banks and consumers, as the cost of handling cash across the world retail economy is enormous
- Visa **does not control its touchpoints**: almost all customer contact happens through the banks who own Visa. They handle everything, from setting rates to issuing the cards. Different banks have different individual customer propositions and strategies, and Visa needs to co-exist and add value to each without losing its own identity
- Visa needs to reach out to a **huge and diverse customer base**, both in terms of geography and in terms of individual demographics. Their customers include wealthy individuals who use cards as a sign of status, alongside disadvantaged young people who have prepayment cards because they cannot open a bank account.

### Objectives

We set out to develop an understanding of consumer needs across Visa's 33 European markets and to use this to develop a brand strategy and set of brand tools that would build a strong profile for Visa, and add value to the banks.

Specific objectives were to:

- diagnose the health of the Visa brand
- clarify the objectives for the brand
- develop 'the biggest idea that the Visa brand can own' in consumers' minds"
- identify a differentiated consumer positioning for Visa
- measure the value the positioning will generate to the business
- confirm the brand strategy as the basis of medium term communications plans and activities

### Target audience

Our audience was diverse, including millions of consumers – poor, rich, sophisticated, naïve – as well as commercial partners, especially the hundreds of member banks who transact business through Visa.

### Strategy, tactics and skills

Our starting point was a thorough analysis of existing data about Visa and its markets. This built on existing knowledge, avoided wasteful duplication of effort and provided a sound platform on which to build.

We went on to work with customers and Visa teams in key markets across Europe, to generate new information and ideas to take the brand forward. This yielded a number of new insights which both reinforced and, in some cases, challenged traditional thinking about the role of the brand. We used a series of workshops to introduce, discuss and develop these insights with the Visa team.

Finally we developed the brand strategy, working in close collaboration with internal teams at Visa and their external partners. We used a combination of pre-existing and tailor-made facilitation skills and techniques to achieve this.

Throughout the work we involved key stakeholders, using a variety of approaches, both to benefit from their expertise but more importantly to ensure that we won their support and commitment. This enabled Visa to move swiftly from brand strategy to implementation, both internally and externally.

Our work was tied into a significant culture change initiative as well as external advertising across a range of media. The new 'life flows better with Visa' campaign demonstrates this and was launched in Spring 2008.